REMARKS

Claims 42-46, 48-54, 56, 58-63, and 64-70 are pending. Claims 42, 50, and 58 are in independent form.

Independent Claims 42 and 50

Claims 42 and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,021,202 to Anderson et al. (hereinafter "Anderson") and U.S. Patent No. 6,275,941 to Saito et al. (hereinafter "Saito").

Claim 42 relates to a machine-implemented method that includes receiving, at an authentication service, digital credential information associated with a first user from a relying party, verifying that the digital credential information is valid using professional license status information that has been stored for a plurality of users, providing verification information indicative of a valid professional license of the first user from the authentication service to the relying party, and providing information from the authentication service to the first user. The information provided to the first user is indicative of receipt of valid digital credential information from the relying party. Claim 42 requires that the relying party be distinct from the first user.

Claim 50 relates to an article comprising a machine-readable medium embodying information indicative of instructions. When the instructions are performed by one or more machines of an authentication service, operations related to the method of claim 42 result.

The rejections of claims 42 and 50 are based on the contention that it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill to have combined Anderson and Saito and arrived at the recited subject matter. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

As a threshold matter, Anderson's primary focus is on financial and other transactions that involve signed electronic documents. *See, e.g., Anderson*, col. 10, line 37-38. In particular, Anderson describes that a payer can electronically create a financial instrument that is payable to the order of the payee. *See, e.g., Anderson*, col. 23, line 41-44. The payer 12 signs and records the financial instrument using a "secure authenticator" that enables the payer to digitally sign the financial instrument and enters the transaction in a secure log. *See, e.g., id.*, col. 23, line 41-49. The authenticator also appends cryptographically signed certificates of, e.g., the payer's bank and the federal reserve bank authenticating the payer's account and the payer's bank, to the financial instrument. *See, e.g., id.*, col. 23, line 50-54.

After receipt of the financial instrument, the payee validates the payer's digital signature using public key cryptography and verifies the payer's bank and the payer's account with the appended certificates. *See, e.g., id.,* col. 23, line 57-60. The transaction proceeds, and a Demand Deposit account is eventually issued to the payer to reflect the debit from the payer's account. *See, e.g., id.,* col. 24, line 38-42.

Like the bulk of Anderson, none of these processes have anything to do with professional license status information. However, Anderson does mention professional license status information. In particular, Anderson's Summary of the Invention describes that:

> "In one embodiment, the invention features a
> computer-based method in which an electronic
> instrument is created for effecting a transfer of
> funds from an account of a payer in a funds-
> holding institution to a payee, the instrument
> including an electronic signature of the payer.
> A digital representation of a verifiable
> certificate by the institution of the
> authenticity of the account, the payer, and the
> public key of the payer is appended to the
> instrument. This enables a party receiving the
> instrument, e.g., the payee or a bank, to verify
> the payer's signature on the instrument. A
> similar certificate of authenticity could also be
> issued in other contexts. For example, a
> certifying authority could certify that a doctor
> is properly licensed and authorized to sign a
> prescription." *See Anderson,* col. 11, line 13-
> 26.

This is believed to be the only mention of professional license status in the entirety of Anderson's disclosure.

Despite the limited role that professional license status information plays in Anderson's disclosure, the rejections of claims 42 and 50 are based on the contention that Anderson's Demand Deposit account statements that reflect account debits render the provision of information indicative of receipt of digital credential information that is validated using professional license status information from an authentication service to a user who is associated with the digital credential information obvious to those of ordinary skill.

Applicant respectfully disagrees. It is self-evident that Demand Deposit account statements do not have anything to do with professional license status information. For example, doctors, nurses, and the cleaning staff all receive Demand Deposit account statements regardless of the status of their professional licenses. Anderson does not describe or suggest that information indicative of receipt of digital credential information that is validated using professional license status information be provided from an authentication service to a user who is associated with the digital credential, as recited.

Saito does nothing to remedy these deficiencies in Anderson. Indeed, Saito does not mention professional license status at all. Accordingly, there is no reason to believe that one of ordinary skill would find it obvious to provide information indicative of receipt of digital credential information that is validated using professional license status information from an authentication service to a user who is associated with the digital credential based on Saito.

Since Anderson and Saito share the same deficiencies, even if Anderson and Saito were combined, one of ordinary skill would not arrive at the recited subject matter. Accordingly, claims 42 and 50 are not obvious over Anderson and Saito. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 42, 50, and the claims dependent therefrom be withdrawn.

Claim 58

Claim 58 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Anderson and Saito.

Claim 58 relates to a system that includes storage configured to store professional license status information for a plurality of users and an authentication server. The authentication service is configured to receive digital credential information associated with a first user from a relying party, verify the digital credential information using

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the professional license status information, provide

verification information indicative of a valid professional

license of the first user to the relying party, and provide

information to the first user. The information is indicative of

receipt of valid digital credential information associated with

the first user from the relying party. The relying party is

distinct from the first user.

    The rejection of claim 58 is based on the contention that

it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill to have

combined Anderson and Saito and arrived at the recited subject

matter. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

    As discussed above, Anderson's primary focus is on

financial and other transactions that involve signed electronic

documents. The bulk of Anderson has nothing to do with

professional license status information except for a mention of

professional license status information in the Summary of the

Invention.

    This mention does not describe or suggest that an

authentication service provide information to a user indicative

of receipt of digital credential information associated with the

user and whose validity has been verified using professional

license status information, as recited. In particular, a Demand

Deposit account statement that reflects account debits does not render the provision of such information obvious to one of ordinary skill.

Saito does nothing to remedy these deficiencies in Anderson. Indeed, Saito does not mention professional license status at all. Accordingly, there is no reason to believe that an authentication service that provides information to a user indicative of receipt of digital credential information associated with the user and whose validity has been verified using professional license status information, as recited, would be obvious to one of ordinary skill.

Since Anderson and Saito share the same deficiencies, even if Anderson and Saito were combined, one of ordinary skill would not arrive at the recited subject matter. Accordingly, claim 58 is not obvious over Anderson and Saito. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 58 and the claims dependent therefrom be withdrawn.

Claim 67-69

Claim 67-69 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Anderson and Saito.

As best understood, the rejections of independent claims 42, 50, and 58 also contend that Saito (and potentially Anderson) inherently describes providing information indicative of receipt of valid digital credential information from an authentication service to a first user. In particular:

> "Saito teaches that when the certificate is valid,
> access control information of the user including
> ciphered user ID, password, and access level is
> transmitted from authentication server 2 to
> application server 6. Then when the application
> server verifies the access control information
> from the authentication server, an accept message
> is transmitted to the client. Because the access
> control information is not sent to the application
> server … unless the certificate [were] determined
> to be valid, the access control information is
> therefore "indicative" of a valid certificate.
> Similarly, the access control information is not
> verified by the application server if the
> certificate [were] not valid, and thus the client
> would not receive the accept message if the
> certificate [were] not valid. As such, the accept
> message is indicative that the certificate was
> valid." *See Office action mailed June 20, 2007*,
> page 2, line 8-17.

In other words, the rejections are based on the contention that a client's receipt of an accept message from an application server inherently constitutes information provided from the authentication service to the first user indicative of receipt of valid digital credential information.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejection, Applicant submits that a rejection on this basis is logically inconsistent with the rejections of dependent claims 67-69. In particular, dependent claims 67-69 recite that information indicative of receipt of valid digital credential information is provided from an authentication service to a user with whom the digital credential information is associated in response to receipt of the valid digital credential information from an unauthorized user.

However, in Saito's scheme, such an unauthorized user would be provided with the accept message. There is nothing in Saito that describes or suggests that user with whom the digital credential information is associated would also receive an accept message or any other information indicative of receipt of valid digital credential information.
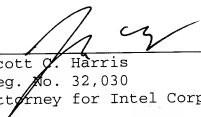
Applicant respectfully submits that such logical inconsistency does not rise to standard required for an obviousness rejection. In particular, that which is logically inconsistent would not be obvious to one of ordinary skill. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of claims 67-69 be withdrawn on this basis as well.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue, or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue, or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

Applicant asks that all claims be allowed. No fees are believed due at this time. Please apply any charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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